ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5   **APPARATUS, SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTOMATICALLY MAKING OPERATIONAL PURCHASING DECISIONS**

An apparatus, system and method for automatically making operation purchasing decisions are provided. The apparatus, system and method make use of

10   purchasing policy rules established by human operators associated with a firm to guide the making of decisions to purchase products and/or services. The actual decisions to purchase are made automatically by the system without requiring human intervention. The decisions to purchase are made by evaluating the possible vendors to identify a set of vendors from which the product or service may be obtained. From

15   this set of vendors, one or more vendors are selected from which to purchase the desired product or service. The selection of these one or more vendors may be based on the established rules, information obtained about each vendor, and the results of negotiation with the vendors. Because the actual decisions are performed automatically without human intervention, the decisions may be made much more

20   quickly than would have been done by a human being.

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